



KANSAS CITY, MO. POLICE DEPARTMENT  
**PROCEDURAL INSTRUCTION**

DATE OF ISSUE  
**12/27/2017**

EFFECTIVE DATE  
**12/27/2017**

NO.  
**17-16**

SUBJECT

**Media Contacts and Interactions**

AMENDS

REFERENCE

Missouri Revised Statute 610.100

RESCINDS

Procedural Instruction 12-2

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This written directive establishes guidelines for contact and interaction with the media and the release of information.

## **II. PROCEDURE**

### **A. Notification and Response**

1. Communications Unit - When notified of a major incident, the Communications Unit supervisor will:
  - a. Ascertain, from the ranking sworn member, a site for assembly of media personnel.
  - b. Notify the Media Unit, Patrol Bureau Commander, and the Duty Officer.
2. Division/Bureau Commander - The Media Unit will be notified by the division/bureau commander or designee of any event/operation within their command that has the potential of attracting media attention.
- \*3. Department Members - Any member contacted by media personnel for interviews in non-emergency situations will notify their supervisor and the Media Unit, prior to the interview. If circumstances require that the interview be conducted prior to notifying the Media Unit, the member will make notification as soon as possible following the interview.
4. Inquiries regarding internal investigations of department personnel will be referred to the Media Unit.

### **B. Media Access To Police Perimeters**

1. A designated staging area will be established along the perimeter of the secure crime scene. Access will not be permitted beyond the secured area unless approved by the ranking investigating sworn member.
2. When a Media Unit member responds to the assembly site of an incident, they will ascertain areas of access for media personnel from the ranking sworn member at the scene.

- \*3. Media coverage personnel and cameras will be permitted adjacent to any barriers and any other areas accessible to the general public.
- \*4. When mobile television, radio transmitting units, or vans arrive at a police perimeter, media personnel will be directed to the media assembly point for their mobile units.

C. Media Access To Police Facilities

- \*1. The Media Unit will be notified of the presence of the media at police facilities.
- 2. Identification of media personnel may be verified by requesting media credentials issued by the media affiliate.
- 3. Media personnel will be allowed access to all general areas open to the public.
- \*4. Media personnel will be escorted at all times by a department member to restricted areas that are not open to the general public. Media personnel will not be allowed access to areas labeled "Law Enforcement Personnel Only" even when escorted, unless prior approval is granted from the Media Unit Commander or the appropriate Division Commander.
- \*5. Media personnel will not have access to non-public department information or sources (e.g., evidence lockers, computers, electronic devices, files, file drawers, report baskets, etc.). It is the escorting member's responsibility to secure such information and sources to ensure that it is not accessible to media personnel.
- 6. Elements with their own facilities will establish a central location for the media to be briefed which can be monitored or secured.

D. Release Of Information To The Media

- 1. The fire department will make all media releases at the scene of a fire until it is determined to be a crime scene.
- \*2. A supervisor or commander will be consulted prior to the release of information not specified in this directive. If a member is uncomfortable addressing media personnel, the member will refer media personnel to a supervisor or commander. A supervisor or commander will be responsible for briefing media personnel in the event a member from the Media Unit will not be responding and will forward the details that were released to the Media Unit.

- \*3. Requests for information regarding any investigation will be directed to the investigating supervisor or the Media Unit for follow-up.
  - a. The Communications Unit may provide preliminary information to media personnel regarding a call for service or police response.
  - b. After hours, if a member receives a request for information about an incident, the member will contact the on-call Media Unit representative or investigating supervisor to coordinate the release of information.
- 4. If a suspect has not been apprehended, the member associated with the investigation may release only that information necessary to aid in the apprehension or to advise the public of the potential danger of the fugitive.
- \*5. The Media Unit will provide all KCPD records and reports requested by media based on Missouri Sunshine law or current department policy.
- \*6. When requested by the media, members at the scene of an incident or any member having factual knowledge of the situation may verbally provide the following information:
  - a. Type of call received and time dispatched.
  - b. Known facts and circumstances relating to the commission of a crime which will not hinder or prejudice the investigation in non-homicide related cases. In homicide related cases the investigating supervisor will be contacted prior to the release of any information.
  - c. General description of any suspect(s) (i.e., race, sex, age).
  - d. A suspect may be identified by name in the following circumstances and in accordance with Missouri Sunshine Law:
    - (1) In cases involving state or federal prosecution with the approval of the appropriate investigative element.
    - (2) In cases involving a violation of a municipal ordinance when a citation or summons has been issued or submitted to the prosecutor's office. Any inquiries will be referred to the Media Unit.
    - (3) In cases when a large public interest exists or when public safety is an issue with the approval of the appropriate investigative element.
  - e. Number, sex and age of victim(s).

- f. The identity of any deceased victim(s) will be released only after their relatives have notified and upon approval of the appropriate investigative element.
  - g. The identity of the investigating and/or arresting sworn member may be released at the discretion of their commander, if such information does not jeopardize or compromise personnel in undercover assignments.
- 7. Information pertaining to the following will not be released:
  - a. Detailed descriptions of suspects or evidence, which may jeopardize the successful conclusion of an investigation.
  - b. Criminal history information.
  - c. The existence or content of any confession, admission, or statement given by individuals, or the refusal or failure of individuals to make any statement, to perform any examination, or to submit to any test.
  - d. Personal opinions about the suspect such as guilt or innocence, mental status, anticipated plea, or value of evidence against the accused.
  - e. The identity, testimony, or credibility of prospective witnesses.
  - f. The personal identifiers of a victim (address, phone numbers, etc.)
  - \*g. Victim information involving sex related offenses or incidents involving juveniles.
  - h. Nature of injuries, weapons used, or cause of death will not be released in homicide cases, unless approved through the ranking investigating sworn member.
  - i. In the event the victim(s) is transported to a hospital, the hospital's name will not be released.
- 8. Photographs and Video Recordings
  - a. Videotaping, photographing and audio recording will not be allowed during any department approved ride-along without the approval of the Media Unit Commander and the appropriate Division Commander.
  - b. Videotaping, photographing and audio recording by media personnel of any law enforcement activity, which occurs in restricted areas, will be prohibited without prior approval.

- c. Photographs and video recording may be taken in areas where media personnel or the public have been given access. Sworn members will restrict news media from using flash, strobes, or high intensity lights when the use of such equipment would hinder a police operation, endanger sworn members or citizens by exposing them to unnecessary risk, or create a hazard (e.g., cause an explosion in a gaseous atmosphere).

Richard C. Smith  
Chief of Police

Adopted by the Board of Police Commissioners this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2017.

Leland Shurin  
Board President

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